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ABSTRACT

This research project implemented and evaluated a program in interpersonal skill development designed to increase the use of applied social skills at a middle school located in northeast Illinois. Evidence of inappropriate interpersonal skills was gathered by using observation checklists, teacher and student surveys, and discipline referrals. Analysis of probable causes revealed that students may exhibit inappropriate skills in the classroom setting because of an increase in single parent families, increased TV viewing, and dual-income families. A review of solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable experts, combined with analysis of the problem setting, resulted in three major areas of intervention: strategies to improve conflict resolution skills, positive self-esteem, and problem solving skills. The post-intervention data indicated that students exhibited an increase in their ability to recognize and resolve conflict and were able to communicate more effectively with both their peers and teachers. The data also indicated that the students exhibited higher self-esteem. Subsequently, the project recommended that students be tracked for a minimum of 2 years in order to establish a solid baseline and allow further documentation of behavior; teachers should allow many opportunities to develop positive self-esteem, practice conflict resolution skills, and use good communication skills; and that teachers need to play an active role in providing opportunities for success in each of these areas. Appendixes include the survey instruments, behavior checklist, and three lesson plans. (Author/SD)

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SOCIAL SKILLS AND PROBLEM SOLVING ABILITIES IN A MIDDLE SCHOOL ADVISORY SETTING

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Abstract

Social Skills and Problem Solving Abilities in a Middle School Advisory Setting

This report describes a program in interpersonal skill development in order to increase the use of applied social skills. The targeted population consists of middle school students in diverse suburban communities, located in northeast Illinois. Evidence for the problem include observation checklists, teacher and student surveys, and discipline referrals.

Analysis of probable cause revealed that students may exhibit inappropriate skills in the classroom setting because of an increase in single parent families, increased TV viewing, and dual income families. Faculty reported an increase in cultural intolerance.

A review of solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable experts, combined with analysis of the problem setting, resulted in three major areas of intervention: strategies to improve conflict resolution skills, positive self-esteem, and problem solving skills.

The post interview data indicates that students exhibited an increase in their ability to recognize and resolve conflict. They were able to communicate more effectively with both their peers and teachers. The data also indicates that the students demonstrated a more favorable impression of themselves. This project recommends that students be tracked for a minimum of two years in order to establish a solid baseline and allow further documentation of behavior. Teachers should allow many opportunities to develop positive self-esteem, conflict resolution skills, and good communication skills. Teachers need to play an active role in providing opportunities for success in each of these areas.

CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

Students of targeted middle school grades five and six exhibit inappropriate interpersonal skills that affect the classroom climate. Evidence for the existence of this problem includes observation check lists, teacher and student surveys, and discipline referrals.

Immediate Problem Context

Site A

School A is located in the northwest suburban area of Chicago with an enrollment of 620 students. The children involved all reside in middle to upper middle class neighborhoods and come from various cultural backgrounds. Approximately 89% of the students in the school are Caucasian. Of the remaining 11%, about 7.3 % are Asian and 3.3 are Hispanic. There are 0.3% low income students whose families are receiving public aid and 1.4% are limited English proficient.

The staff averages 50 teachers with 86.8% females and 13.2% male, and of those 98.6% are Caucasian and 0.7% are Hispanic. Teachers have an average of 13.9 years of teaching experience. About 45.6% have a master's degree and 54.4% have a bachelor's degree. Presently, the student to teacher ratio is 17.2:1. This ratio also includes staff who are not classroom teachers, as well as special education

resource teachers. Classrooms have about 26 children. Teacher salaries average $45,298 and administrator salaries average $81,666.

School A has used the "school within a school" approach for the past thirteen years with students at each grade level - sixth, seventh, and eighth - divided into two teams. The teachers on each interdisciplinary team, who meet daily, work together to implement the curriculum, meet the needs of the students on the team, work with other school personnel such as counselors, resource center staff, and teachers of fine and practical arts. The team approach enhances positive attitudes toward learning, promotes a sense of belonging, and helps build positive relationships among students and adults. Organizing middle school students into teams puts a structure in place that provides security in a world that students sometimes see as being hostile.

The school houses the self-contained Learning Disabled/Behavior Disabled (herein referred to as LD/BD) programs for the district. Along with the special education resource program, full-time aides assist inclusion students in the regular program.

The building principal has been involved in the field of education for about 25 years and is approachable, emphatic, knowledgeable, and innovative. The principal has an associate working with her. Team leaders, department chairmen and the principal make up a committee to provide consensus decision making in matters of school concerns, from curriculum adaptations, to inservice opportunities, to community involvement in the educational process.

There are seven elementary schools and two middle schools in the district. Each school also receives services from several auxiliary personnel who include the school psychologist, the social worker, the school nurse, and the speech and

language pathologist. Some of these individuals are in the building full-time and others serve on an itinerant basis, meaning that they are assigned to other buildings and are present on a part-time basis.

The facilities were built in 1924 and provide an adequate educational environment despite classrooms that are generally considered small and a library learning center that was not designed for large numbers of computers to be in use at the same time.

The central administrative structure is headed by a superintendent who is supported by a staff of assistant superintendents for curriculum and instruction, special education, personnel, business, and building-grounds and maintenance. Each of the assistant superintendents has a staff.

On the whole, this school district has stabilized after experiencing a decade of declining enrollments which necessitated closing four of its elementary building. In recent years, the school age populations appear to have stabilized enough so that the district feels confident in undertaking a remodeling/rebuilding program that is presently in progress in two of its schools.

Site B

School B is located in the far northwest suburban area of Chicago. The children reside in low, lower middle and upper middle class neighborhoods and come from various cultural backgrounds. This district consists of five schools with 750 students in school B. Approximately 74% of the students are Caucasian, threepercent are African-American, 15% are Hispanic, eight % Asian Pacific, and .2% are Native American. Approximately 14% of the students come from low income families and seven percent come from limited English proficient homes.

The staff averages 75 teachers with 98% females and two percent males. Of those, 98% are Caucasian, one percent Hispanic, and one percent African-American. Teachers have an average of 12.8 years of teaching experience, 45% hold a bachelor's degree, while 55 % hold a master's degree. Presently, the student to teacher ratio is 16.9:1. Classrooms have an average of 26 students. Teacher's salaries average $43,000 and administrator's salaries average $71,000.

School B has been established as a middle school (grades 5-6) for the past four years. Prior to that time, this school was an intermediate school, grades 3-5. Teachers are members of small teams, usually three to four teachers who teach 75-100 students. Each team is supplied with the necessary teacher aides and support staff to meet the needs of the mainstreamed, instructional learning disabled students, and bilingual students. The teams meet regularly to discuss student needs. This type of small team arrangement helps to enhance a closeness between teacher and students and helps to foster a caring environment.

The facilities were originally built in the early 1900's. Several additions have been added to meet the need of this growing community. School B experienced tremendous growth in the 1980's and has now leveled off.

Site C

School C is located in the northwest suburban area of Chicago. The children involved all reside in group quarters, apartments, and middle to upper middle class family owned dwellings. There are two elementary schools and one middle school in the district with School C containing 899 Students. Approximately 67% of the students are Caucasian. Of the remaining 33%, four percent are African-American, 15% are Hispanic, and 13% are Asian. Thirty nine percent of the student population speak a

second language.

Approximately 18% of the student population are low income families who receive public aid. Four percent of these students come from a nearby private and state funded facility which supplies services for children who have been temporarily or permanently removed from their homes. Seven percent of these students are limited English proficient.

The staff averages 107 teachers with 81.8% females and 18.2% males, and of these 98.1% are Caucasian and 1.9% are Hispanic. Teachers have an average of 14.5 years of teaching experience and 46.9% have a master's degree or above while 50% have a bachelor's degree. The current teacher to student ratio is 17.1:1 and the classrooms have approximately 29 children in each. This ratio also includes staff who are not classroom teachers. Teacher's salaries average $45,266 and administrator's salaries average $75,990.

School C has been steadily moving to full implementation of the middle school concept. Major components of this concept include the recently added advisory/advisee program, heterogeneous grouping (except math), introduction of interdisciplinary units in grades sixth through eighth, activity period added for sixth grade students, Snowflake - a self-esteem drug awareness program, and the Drug Abuse Resistance Education Program (DARE). Emphasis is placed on service projects in the school and community and field trips and curriculum are more closely coordinated. School C is also moving toward more authentic assessment within the curriculum. Language arts, writing, reading, and social science are taught through interdisciplinary units.

School C houses ten special services which include: bilingual/English as a

Second Language (herein referred to as ESL), resource, self-contained BD/LD, Mildly Mentally Impaired (herein referred to as MMI), State Orphanage Resource, full inclusion, gifted, and Chapter 1. Part time aides assist inclusion students in the regular program.

Each school also receives services from several auxiliary personnel which includes the school psychologist, the social worker, the school nurse, and the speech and language pathologist. Some of these individuals are in the building full-time and others serve on an itinerant basis also serving other buildings.

The facility which house School C was built in 1965 and has been remodeled on an as needed basis. The facility is well kept and provides an adequate educational environment despite classrooms that are considered small. The learning center was not designed to accommodate a large amount of computer, but currently provides 15 computer work stations.

The central administrative structure is headed by a superintendent who is supported by a staff consisting of an assistant superintendent, whose primary responsibilities are: student services, staff services, health services, special education services, support personnel, clerical aides, substitutes, interns, and student teachers; a Director of Educational Services whose primary responsibilities are accreditation, curriculum, instruction, assessment, technology, special programs, gifted, Title 1, developmental reading, bilingual/ESL, and library services; a Principal whose primary responsibilities are educational leadership/building management; a Director of Business Services whose primary responsibilities are financial services, transportation, and food services; and a Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds whose primary responsibilities are maintenance and custodial services.

This district recently moved the fifth grade from the middle school back to the elementary school buildings in order to create much needed space. The enrollment is projected to grow through the year 2007 and stabilize thereafter.

Surrounding Community

School A

The community served by School A has a population of about 75,460 people. The district serves all or part of two communities which mirror each other in their descriptions. Per capita income averages $22,800, while medium family income is $60,600. The percent of the residents listed as below poverty is 2.4. Households average 2.6 persons and residential housing values average $169,100. Apartments rent for an average of $655 per month. This is an upwardly mobile community with 89.9% of its residents having high school degrees and 39.5% college graduates.

The School A community representatives, particularly PTA Board members, are often brought into planning for the reading and learning outcomes, and assist in this by providing cultural arts and other programs to enrich learning.

School A is in the process of a building program. Neighborhood concerns have included starting times of the construction crew and cost of the project. Passing a referendum was considered unattainable, so the district is contracting with a private group to finance the school building and will be renting it until it is paid for.

Community B

School B community has a population of approximately 20,000 people. The district serves parts of two surrounding communities. Per capita income averages $20,000 with medium income to be $55,000. The percent of residents listed as below poverty is 3.9. Households average 4.2 persons and residential housing values

average $185,000.

School B has a major concern with class size. Due to increased enrollment in late August and early September, many classes exceed 30 students. Parents have voiced concerns about these large classes. Teachers, too, feel the impact of not being able to spend the time needed with individual students. Inclusion is another issue of concern within this district. Parents are concerned that the classroom teacher will not be able to spend the necessary time with the "regular" students if he or she has inclusion students to deal with.

School B has active community involvement in the school. There is a very dynamic PTO and many dedicated parent volunteers. Surveys indicate that 97% of parents are pleased with the overall progress of the district.

Community C

The community served by School C has a population of about 53,168 and per capita income averages $20,322, while mean family income is $52,180. The percent of residents listed below poverty level is 2.7. Households average 2.62 persons and residential housing values average $155,100. Apartments rent for an average of $564 per month.

A government subsidized apartment complex is located within the community and houses the majority of the school district's students who are limited English proficient. Due to the high cost of ESL and Bilingual Education, many of the District's taxpayers look upon this situation as a very financially cumbersome situation for the district to fund. Also, 4.1 percent of the district's students come from a private and state funded facility that provides housing to children who have been permanently or temporarily removed from their homes. Many of these children come into the district

with severe issues and require a mirage of additional services that again, cost the district precious resources.

The School C community encourages full community involvement providing such events as family night, grade level fun nights, and multicultural nights. Parents are encouraged to be a significant and visible part of the school and their child's life.

National Context of the Problem

When addressing the reasons for the current rise in aggressive behaviors, one should take a look at the changes in the American family since 1970. The following statistics appeared in Newsweek (1994). The U.S. Bureau Office states that there has been a 200% growth rate in single parent households since 1970, from 4 million to 8 million homes. Statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics show the number of married mothers leaving the home for work had increased by 65%, from 1.2 million in 1970 to 16.8 million in 1990. The Yankelovich Youth Monitor reported that 36% of children polled said their chores included preparing their own meals where the same polled figure was only 13% in 1987. The FBI Uniform Crime Report reflects an estimated 70% of juvenile offenders come from single parent families while 30% of juvenile offenders come from two parent homes. The FBI also reports that children under age 18 in 1994 were 244% more likely to be killed by guns than they were in 1986. The study, "What Children Fear" revealed that 28% of youths, ages 9-17 worried about being beaten up or attacked. Newsweek Children's Defense Fund Poll reported one in six youths between the ages of 10 and 17 have seen or know someone who has been shot. The National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse estimates the number of child abuse victims increased 40% between 1985 and 1992 (as cited in Newsweek, l994).

In 1986, The Carnegie Corporation of New York established the Carnegie Council an Adolescent Development. The Task Force looked at the challenges confronting America's youth. They produced some new approaches to education that promotes healthier development by adolescents through better schools. The published outcome of the Carnegie Council was the report Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century. It gave some specific guidelines to foster and promote better citizenship among students. The report calls for every middle school to establish an advisory program and a school wide curriculum that teaches values, compassion, regard for human worth and dignity, tolerance for diversity, and a need for social justice. Also recognized was the need for social skills such as collaboration, problem solving, and conflict resolution (Carnegie, 1990).

There are essentially thousands of resources that offer techniques for conflict resolution, good social skills, and problem solving. The staggering statistics on increased violence are readily available. The drastic changes in the family unit which have affected the United States over the past twenty to thirty years directly correlates with a rise in violence and lower levels of tolerance. Social skills and problem solving, or the lack of these traditionally family instilled values seem to directly impact the ability to resolve conflicts, and their lack has a negative effect on classroom climate and hence academic achievement.

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

Within the targeted elementary schools, documentation was collected to show evidence of inappropriate interpersonal skills. The following instruments were utilized for the purpose of data collection. Teachers and students participated in affective surveys, a baseline group observation behavior checklist was completed on the sample group, and inappropriate behavior referrals were charted.

The program in interpersonal skills development was implemented and documented from September, 1996 through December, 1996. Teacher and student surveys were given in the beginning of September. Behavior checklist and inappropriate behavior referrals were also charted. The surveys (Appendix B and C) were designed and utilized by the researchers to measure and establish affective as well as behavioral baselines. Referrals and observed behaviors were charted to determine decreases or increases in inappropriate/appropriate interpersonal skills. The behavior checklist was created by the researchers to chart categorized behaviors (Appendix D).

School A has 13 students, school B has 13 students and school C has 15 students involved in the interpersonal development program. A total of 41 students were utilized in this process. The behavior checklist (Appendix D) was used to gather baseline data to show the need for intervention in the areas of concern. Of the 17 incidents recorded during the initial week of this study 26 percent dealt with non-

cooperation, seven percent were incidents with physical aggression, and seven percent were incidents with verbal aggression.

For this checklist, verbal aggression was anytime a student spoke to other students using put downs or to the teacher using inappropriate language. Physical aggression was any act where a student physically responded inappropriately and non-cooperation referred to students not following directions given by the teacher.

A summary of the number of behavior incidents is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Summary of Conflict Incident Tallies in Targeted Classrooms
for One Week Period in September, 1996

School A number of incidents:
- A = Verbal Aggression
- B = Physical Aggression
- C = Non-cooperation

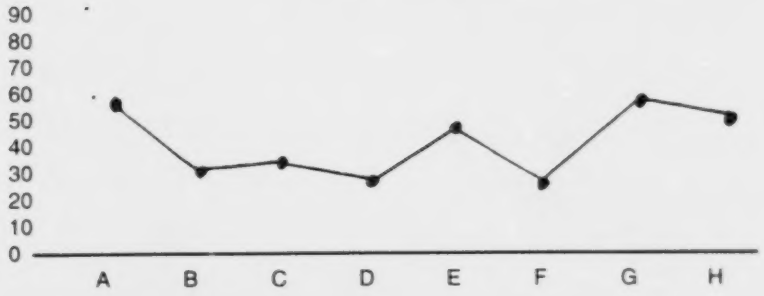
School B number of incidents:
- D = Verbal Aggression
- E = Physical Aggression
- F = Non-cooperation

School C number of incidents:
- G = Verbal Aggression
- H = Physical Aggression
- I = Non-cooperation

A letter to colleagues (Appendix A) and a teacher survey (Appendix B) regarding teacher perception of classroom behavior were distributed in the three middle schools. Analysis of the surveys completed by thirty two teachers revealed the need for interventions to improve self-esteem and conflict resolution. Responses of 51-75% and 76-100% reflected that 56% of the teachers indicated their students had a low self-esteem. They also indicated that 32% of the students had difficulty working in groups. Thirty five percent of the students were verbally abusive to others. Additionally, at least 27% of teachers felt their respondents were physically aggressive toward others. Responses also showed 48% of the teachers thought the students showed little or no respect for other students, 36% showed little or no respect for adults, and 58% showed little or no respect for the property of others. Lastly, 52% felt the students did not think before they acted. This data is summarized in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Teacher Survey Results Indicating a Need for Interventions
in the Areas of Student Self-Esteem and Conflict Resolution



A = Percent of responses indicating low self-esteem
B = Percent of responses indicating inability to work in groups
C = Percent of responses indicating instances of verbal aggression
D = Percent of responses indicating incidents of physical aggression
Percent of responses indicating a lack of respect for:
E = others F = adults G = property of others
H = Percent of responses indicating impulsitivity

Table 2

Number of Teacher Responses in Each Category on Teacher Survey October, 1996

Question	1 Less Than 25%	2 25-50%	3 51-75%	4 76-100%
1. What percentage of your students do not have respect for, or a favorable impression of themselves?	14	11	5	2
2. What percentage of students have difficulty working in groups?	26	8	2	2
3. What percentage of your students are verbally abusive to others?	24	9	1	3
4. What percentage of your students are physically aggressive toward others?	26	5	3	2
5. What percentage of your students show little or no respect for:				
other	16	12	2	1
adults	29	8	4	1
property of others	13	13	4	1
6. What percentage of your students do not think before they act?	17	10	5	4

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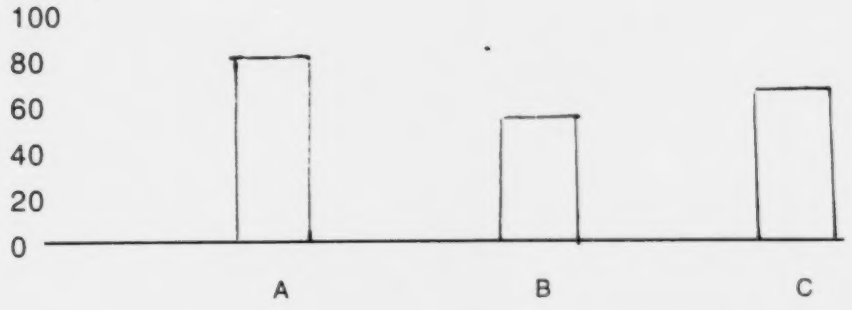
Table 2 presents a more detailed summary of the data in Figure 2. It illustrates the total number of responses in each question on the teacher survey (Appendix B). The questions asked were used to obtain responses that would show relevance to the purpose of this action research, which was to determine the need for intervention in the areas of self-esteem and conflict resolution. Question one dealt with self-esteem and questions two through six dealt with teacher perception of student social skills. Teacher responses indicated students could be helped by using lessons dealing with self-esteem, group participation, verbal and physical aggression, and respect for children, adults, and property of others.

Student surveys (Appendix C) were administered to 41 fifth and sixth grade students in September, 1996. Figure 3 shows an average of the total number of responses to the questions on the surveys. This graph indicates that most students had high self-esteem, however, it does show a need for better communication and conflict resolution skills.

Figure 3



Student Survey Results Indicating Perceptions of Self-Esteem, Communication Skills, and Conflict Resolution Skills

A = Percent of responses indicating positive self-esteem
B = Percent of responses indicating good communication skills
C = Percent of responses indicating positive conflict resolution skills

Table 3 depicts individual responses to the student survey questions shown in Appendix C. Student responses varied from strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree. Questions one and five dealt with self-esteem, question two dealt with social skills while questions three and four dealt with conflict resolution. There was a marked difference between the teacher surveys and student surveys, with students seeing no difficulty in the areas of concern. It should be noted that students cannot recognize the need to improve social skills if they have never been taught appropriate behavior.

Table 3

Student Pre-Intervention Survey Results
September, 1996

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I feel safe in the classroom.	16	19	1	0
2. Students in this classroom make fun of other students.	3	12	18	3
3. Students in this classroom hit or yell to settle their difference.	2	5	17	12
4. I behave in the same way at school as I do at home.	4	20	10	4
5. I like coming to school.	7	20	6	3

Probable Cause

The complexion of the American family has changed significantly over the past 25 years. Statistics indicate a 200% increase in homes headed by a single parent and mothers leaving the home to work has seen a 65% increase. With an increase in both parents working outside the home, and the increase in single-parent homes, children are taking on more responsibilities at home. The Yankelovich Youth Monitor's 1994 poll reflected 36% of the children polled reported making their own meals as part of their responsibilities at home.

Studies in the FBI Uniform Crime Reports indicate an estimated 70% of juvenile offenders are the products of single-parent families and children under 18 years of age are 244% were more likely to be killed by guns than their counterparts in 1986 (Newsweek, 1994).

Concerns have been raised recently over the amount of time spend watching television. Empty programming and video games occupy many hours so that children are now spending an unprecedented amount of time before the television (Costa, Bellanca, Fogarty,1992).

As for schools, it has never been the responsibility of the public education system to instill values in a public school setting. Therefore, most schools have a value empty philosophy. In many cases, schools follow this philosophy in order to legally protect themselves. Families are too busy working to teach values. Television is for entertainment and has not been a place for teaching morality. Where do children learn values in current society? The statistics previously stated reflect an unfortunate scenario in terms of values and current society's youth (Costa, Bellanca, Fogarty, 1992).

Schools will have to extend a value rich environment for students to grow into adults who have strong value systems. Behavior development programs offer basic skills training in several general areas that look to improve youth behavior and establish basic values.

Therefore it becomes evident that these following causes are the major reasons for children's inability to exhibit appropriate classroom behavior:

1. cultural intolerance
2. socioeconomic background
3. class size
4. lack of support services
5. increase in single parent homes
6. mothers working outside the home
7. increase TV viewing
8. value empty philosophy

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

The research findings on the effects of inappropriate interpersonal skills and classroom climate provide strong evidence to suggest it is time for schools to intervene and address this issue. Probable causes that have been identified with inappropriate interpersonal skills and poor classroom climate are the increase in single parent homes, cultural intolerance, the need for dual income families, and socioeconomic background. Further causes also cited were the increase in television viewing time among school aged children, value empty philosophy in public schools, large class sizes, immigrants with language deficiencies and a lack of supportive services.

Life with all its problems will not get any easier as students mature and become adults in this world. Those who have gained some success in dealing with conflict and can apply this knowledge to real life situations have a better chance for success in their lives and in creating a better world (Malm, 1992; Metis Associates, Inc., 1990).

Research findings show that conflict resolution was once considered a win - lose situation (Lane & McWhirter, 1992), or the one with the most power wins (Scherer, 1992). This is being challenged by newer theories which adhere to the idea of "helping people develop a peaceful and effective method of interpersonal conflict resolution" (McFarland, 1992, p. 18).

Our schools have functioned on the theory that unacceptable behavior can be classified into three categories: between teacher and student, between student and student, and between student and acceptable behavior (Johnson, Johnson, Dudley, and Burnett, l992). The disciplinarian in all these cases was the teacher. If the teacher was unable to resolve the problem, students were taken to the principal who gave the lecture about socially acceptable behavior. If that didn't do the job, there was always time out rooms or expulsion. What students learned in these situations was that the adults held the power.

More and more schools are setting up conflict resolution management instruction. This instruction deals with violence prevention, what it is and how to resolve it (Post, 1991). Often basic skills of reading, math and work habits are combined with conflict resolution as a means of controlling dropout rates (Turlington, 1991). Advisor/Advisee programs are gaining acceptance in middle schools as a means of helping students with decision making and problem solving skills to lessen stress in their lives. (Whisler & McCombs, 1992).

In the last ten years many schools have begun advisor/advisee programs. These programs are meant to develop trust between teacher and a small group of students. It is a place where students feel comfortable sharing and where they know what they say will remain confidential. During these sessions students work alone and in cooperative groups in areas to develop group rapport, self esteem, conflict resolution, study skills, and other interpersonal skills.

Elementary students have definite ideas about the role of teacher as advisor in the school setting. There are five areas students have identified as being important to

them: 1) teachers caring about their students, 2) being able to relate, 3) being there for the students, 4) enjoying advisement and showing it, and 5) having their own personal way of teaching (Bushnell & George, 1993).

It is during these classes that teachers are able to relate to their students as more of a friend than as a teacher. The students can feel that the teacher cares about them as a person, not just as a pupil trying to learn a subject. It is important that the student sees the teacher as a person with likes and dislikes - as a human being. The teacher needs to be real.

Highlands Elementary School in Edina, Minnesota chose the Peacemaker Program to train their students in peaceful conflict resolution. Students had depended on adults to mediate their conflict. Through the use of this program they "learned procedures, skills, and attitudes required to resolve conflicts constructively in their personal lives at home, in school, at work, and in the community." (Johnson et al., 1992, p. 10).

The Peacemaker Program involves students becoming the mediators in conflicts between students. If negotiation between students does not work then the next step is peer mediation where one of their fellow classmates acts as an unbiased mediator. Students take turns being mediator. The results of this program have been less behavioral referrals to teachers but perhaps even more impressive is the transfer of these negotiation and mediation skills to other areas of the students' life (Johnson et al., l992).

Peaceable Classroom is an example of an advisory program in Massachusetts that emphasizes cooperation, communication, affective education, appreciation for diversity, and conflict resolution (Dreidler,1994). It is a three part curriculum guide that

involves student/teacher interaction on the various situations middle school students may encounter.

An article in the Social Studies Texan outlines a lesson for compromise as a way to resolve conflict before escalation occurs (Eddings, 1992). The arena chosen in school was a sixth grade world cultures class. This article offers various situations where students role play in skits to find resolution to any number of conflict situations (Edding, 1992).

Kay Burke has devoted an entire book, What to Do With the Kid Who...Developing Cooperation, Self-Discipline, and Responsibility in the Classroom, Ms. Burke gives very specific rules to address current classroom issues on discipline and gives some strategies to cope and assist the student who seeks revenge and may be physically or verbally aggressive (Burke, l992). She provides some seemingly useful techniques to assist the aggressive child in the classroom setting. It is her hope that teachers will take these techniques and plug them into the advisory setting and students will learn to utilize these tools when frustration or conflict cause natural feelings of aggression.

Peer mediation goes along with the idea of advisory groups. With peer mediation, the students will be the "primary" educator who will gain significant insight on which actions are appropriate in a given circumstance (Lane and McWhirter, 1992). Project STOP (Schools Teaching Options for Peace) is a program that educates all those involved on the importance of peer mediation (New York City B.O.E., 1993). The basic reason for peer mediation is the belief that students respect their peers more and will be more willing to follow their advise rather than a teacher who is not involved in the same "scene" as the middle schooler both inside and outside of school.

Peer mediation is a style of conflict resolution which has evolved in our schools in the last decade. Students "find within the process a place for talking about problems, learning more about the views of other, and practicing better communication in a nonviolent, non judgmental atmosphere" (Lane and McWhirter, 1992, p. 17). Peer mediation has improved students' ability to self regulate their behavior and improve self esteem (Lane & McWhirter, l992).

For some, the word conflict denotes negative destructive behavior and something which needs to be eliminated (McFarland, 1992). Working through conflict is a "people skill" necessary in today's world (McFarland, l992, p. 26). There are three methods people use to address conflict: 1) being dominate and needing control, 2) trying to please others without really expressing their own opinion, and 3) cooperation by realizing conflict is a fact and learning how to work through it. The use of cooperation is the method which will produce results useful in school, at work, and in students' relationships (McFarland, 1992).

By using cooperative teaching groups, changes were seen in students attitudes. They listened to others and improved in their use of conflict strategies and ability to use different ways to solve conflict. These negotiation skills also were shown to improve students' grades. With less discipline from the teachers there was better student /teacher relations and they no longer let their feelings be a stumbling block to learning (Scherer, 1992).

In 1995 Koener reported that "Volunteering promotes all basic values, encourages growth in many by - product values, and is an excellent way for students to experience success from their own activity." By improving students's self esteem you can improve interpersonal skills.

At Webb Middle School in Austin, Texas, administration and staff members wanted to prevent students getting involved in gang activity. Teachers had heard such comments as "Miss, in school we are nothings," ...he said in a courteous matter-of-fact manner. "In a gang, we are somebodies" (Juarez, 1996, p. 30). It seemed that gangs were effective in providing adolescents with self value and meeting their identity needs. The staff felt it was imperative that the school intervene and find a way to deal with this problem. This school provided a roster of new clubs that would meet during the day. Some 50 clubs were established that would address almost every possible interest. These clubs gave students an arena to experience success. A student can not receive an "F" in the club. The clubs also provided the opportunity for new relationships between adults and students. It offered a variety of experiences for different careers and the exposure to those potential careers. This program also called for teachers to teach academics using more activity-based lessons. The staff discovered that the more success experienced by students the less likely students were to associate themselves with gangs, drop-out of school, or have high truancy rates.

Evidence of the success of this program was seen in lower truancy and dropout rates. Students began wearing colors associated with the club rather than a gang affiliated color. Webb Middle School reduced many of the undesired behaviors through building self esteem and interpersonal skills.

Lack of interpersonal skills in dealing with conflict leads to disruptive classroom behavior. Lessons to learn coping skills tend to increase a students' confidence and self esteem which will likely improve classroom atmosphere allowing for more attention to the subject matter rather than dealing with discipline problems (Goldstein,

Sprafkin, Gershaw, Klein, 1980).

We teachers need to exhibit an atmosphere where we value all students as competent. Koerner states "Positive beliefs about one's capabilities and the knowledge that others recognize these capabilities may be necessary first steps toward respect for self and others." No longer is it enough to teach the 'three R's'. Students today come to school without the social skills to deal with problems and we as teachers need to teach these skills for life. With the skills comes the confidence in self to improve life (NAASP Practioner, 1995, p. 2) .

"Community service links the schools with society and should be a part of the middle school curriculum" (Ediger, l993). Schools and society are interwoven. We should try to integrate schools as much as possible with the community and society. A well-designed service learning project does more than help the homeless or pick up trash in public parks (Willis, l993). Students apply what they've learned in the classroom, develop leadership and communication skills, become more caring and responsible citizens and at the same time, help meet community needs in the process.

Students in the middle schools love a cause (Kiner, l993). They are happy to walk, ride a bike, roller blade, etc. for a worthy cause. The Whittier Middle School in Sioux Falls, South Dakota has made community service one of the major components of their curriculum. They found that certain factors need to be present for community service projects to be successful. The students should be involved in the planning and support from classroom teachers is most crucial. The Whittier School found that community service projects had a significant impact on school climate. Students' self-esteem became more positive. They had a real sense of pride in their school and

community. Parents became more actively involved in their students' efforts to improve the community. On the whole, Whittier School found service learning projects to be a very positive and rewarding experience, both for the students involved in the projects and the staff and parents also.

Another idea for a community service project is to involve the elderly. Students get the opportunity to interact and entertain residents of their local nursing home. One public school teacher who strongly believed in involving her sixth graders in the community established one such program (Ediger, l993). The students had completed a unit on creative writing and based their service project with the elderly on that unit. Students presented their writings to the nursing home residents in a variety of different formats. Some examples were: reading aloud a student composed tall tale, reciting a poem and sharing illustrations, presenting a skit, and reading a haiku about nature. After the sharing time, the students had time to visit with the residents. Both the students and the residents enjoyed the time that they shared. These particular students plan on returning for another visit.

Programs that enhance positive self image have also provided valuable assistance in improving school environment. At Huntington Beach High School staff members implemented the usual enforcement of a dress code, more severe punishment for unacceptable behaviors and revocation of dances, athletic events and any social events that were becoming disruptive. The entire student population was paying for the poor conduct of a few students. After researching the culprit, Huntington Beach High school officials found that the problems were not the direct cause of a single group, but a cross section of the entire school population.

Staff members of Huntington Beach High searched for an innovative program

to address the individuals causing the problems. Huntington Beach picked up the idea of personalization from Theodore Sizer, founder of the coalition of Essential Schools, who views personalization as the single most important factor that keeps young people in school. When education is personalized, Sizer says, students are known by the adult professionals in the school (Phi Delta Kappan, V. 77, pp. 362-363, Jan. 1996).

Huntington Beach High made "hot lists" of identified "problem" students. Sizer's program was then implemented and customized to accommodate the students. Initially, the adopt-a-kid program was initiated. This program matches adults with students and gives time daily, weekly, or as needed for adult to student conferencing. It also allows time for students to get to know one adult on a personal , caring level. This concept is very similar to the peer conferencing concept of middle school advisories.

After two years, Huntington Beach High saw significant results. There was a 47% decrease in suspension over the previous year and "the list" was 51% shorter. The climate on campus had improved and staff members agreed to move toward block scheduling. Block scheduling allows teacher to have 90 students per day and spend more time with the same students.

"No frills. No new funds. No grants. Just some simple, low cost efforts to personalize have yielded dramatic improvements at Huntington Beach High " (Shore, 1996).

In the past, the family has provided the arena for most children to acquire interpersonal skills. However, this is the case in far fewer homes than twenty years ago based on the changing roles and structure of the American family. Increasingly,

higher income demands have been placed on the family so that in most cases both parents are working to provide an adequate income, thus, leaving little quality time for the transfer of such skills. Unfortunately, many children go to school unprepared with the essential tools necessary to deal with others. Through necessity, the arena for transference of interpersonal skills has landed on the schools shoulders and in schools where intervention has been applied the results are positive.

Reviewing the myriad of successful solution strategies, it appears that there is a direct correlation in the increase of appropriate interpersonal skills and an improved classroom climate with the applied interventions. Providing students with skills to resolve conflicts, developing trusting relationships with adults and peers, allowing students to mediate and apply learned skills, letting children build self esteem through personal success, and getting students involved in helping their communities all seem to be key ingredients for building strong interpersonal skills and positive classroom climates within a school setting.

Project Objectives and Process Statement

Analysis of the probable cause data discussed previously suggests the need for an intervention to enhance appropriate interpersonal skills that affect classroom climate.

Therefore:

> As a result of a program in interpersonal skill development, during the period of September 1996 to January 1997, the target fifth and sixth grade classes will increase in the use of applied social skills, as measured by teacher observation, teacher and student surveys, and a review of discipline forms.

In order to accomplish the objective, the following processes are necessary:

1. Direct instruction of identified skills
2. Selection/design of activities to apply targeted skill
3. Process/reflection strategies for transfer

This action plan was designed to introduce interpersonal skills and focus conversation on conflict resolution, communication skills and positive self esteem. The direct instruction will be divided into these three components. These lessons will be taught twice weekly for 30 minutes.

The implementation of these lessons is presented in an outline form and in chronological order and will be refined as the students and time allows. The lessons plans consist of materials from an advisory program created by the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development. These lessons consist of cooperative group activities as well as individual activities.

Lesson Plan Outline

The communication phase of this action research project will begin in September, 1996.

I. Objective: The students will be able to effectively communicate among themselves.

A. "Double Circles" - an introduction activity where students meet each other and ask a brief question.

B. "Double Circle Questions" - general 'get to know you' questions

C. "Me Bag" - students share item that tell something about who they are.

D. "Know Your School Rules" - understanding the rules of the school.

E. "Survey Says" - collaborative survey with graph of favorite things.

F. "How Groups Work" - group cooperation activity.

G. "Caring Is" - create a skit about what caring is/is not.

H. "Things to find on a Penny" - as a group find as many things as possible on the list.

The self esteem phase of this plan will begin in November, l996.

II. Objective: Students will realize they are unique and special.

A. "In My Own Words" - activity to develop positive self esteem.

B. "Me Collage" - develop greater self - awareness.

C. "Me Collage "continued - students explain to the class some of the items in their collage.

D. "Am I a Good Student?" - quessionaire of study habits/attitudes.

E. "Three Legged Stool" - realizing what self confidence is/defining the concept.

F. "Feeling Stress" - situations that cause stress.

G. "Alternatives For Coping" - coping alternatives to stress.

H. "Celebrating Family Traditions" - students give special family customs and traditions and share with class.

I. "Grow Your Family Tree" - create a family tree.

The conflict resolution phase of this action research project will begin in December, 1996

III. Objective: Students will be able to recognize conflict and learn how to deal constructively with it.

A. "Standing Up" - students journal about a time when they felt they were taken advantage of and how they stood up for themselves.

B "Putting Up a Fight" - students will state what they are willing to fight for.

C. "A Conflict I Saw" - continue to define conflict and note if any good comes from conflict.

D. "Role Playing Conflict" - role play and identify specific conflict.

E. "Role Playing Conflict" - identify specific conflict and describe feelings.

F. "Responses to Conflict" - respond to 'soft' and 'hard' responses to conflict.

G. "Coming Down the Conflict Escalator" - Students use CAPS to solve.

H. "Making an Offer" - some things that get in the way of making an offer.

I. "Pass the Can" - group effort to reach a common goal.

J. "Car Wash" - express positive feeling for others

Methods of Assessment

Various data collection methods will be used to access the effects of these

interventions. The action plan will be evaluated in February, 1997.

To determine the effects of the interventions teacher records will be kept. These records will include teacher journals, discipline referrals, student journals/reflections, teacher and student surveys. This information will be obtained from teacher and office records.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The terminal objective of the interventions addressed the inappropriate interpersonal skills of middle school grades five and six and how they affected classroom climate. Evidence for the existence of this problem includes observation check list, teacher and student surveys, and discipline referrals. The terminal objectives of this action research project stated:

> As a result of a program in interpersonal skill development, during the period of September 1996 to January 1997, the targeted fifth and sixth grade classes will increase in the use of applied communication skills, positive self esteem, and conflict resolution skills as measured by teacher observation, teacher and student surveys, and a review of discipline forms.

In order to accomplish the objective, the following processes were necessary: direct instruction of identified skills, selection and design of activities to apply targeted skill and process/reflection strategies for transfer.

This project was carried out in two sixth grade classrooms and one fifth grade classroom with regular and included education students. The project was implemented within advisory groups with additional reinforcement during academic classes. Lesson were chosen to meet the goals and objectives of this project and served as tool for on-going curriculum development.

This project had three major objectives: communication, self esteem, and

conflict resolution. These were taught in a sixteen week time-frame. Two of the participating teachers devoted twenty minutes per day five days per week. The third teacher involved spent thirty minutes per day two days per week. It was apparent after several weeks that no deviation to this project was necessary.

Teacher input through the use of a survey (Appendix B) was sought. Results established and validated the need for such a project. The process began with the recognition of the need for positive self awareness through a student survey. After analyzing the collected data it was decided what plan of action would be followed. Eight lessons were chosen to implement the communication phase. Nine lessons were chosen to implement the self esteem phase, and ten lessons were chosen to implement the conflict resolution phase. Lesson samples can be found in appendix E.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

One activity of the communication component was "Double Circles". The object of this lesson #1 (Appendix E) was to allow the students to meet each other and ask a brief question. Teacher observations following this lesson show that the results were positive. Children used listening skills and verbal communication skills to relate what they learned about another individual, and were more aware of each child's uniqueness. This allowed the children to feel important and valuable. The students were active participants in this activity, developing a knowledge and respect for one another and providing an opportunity for students to better understand each other.

In the self esteem phase of this plan one of the most valued activities was the "Me Collage", lesson #2 (Appendix E). The objective of this lesson was to develop greater self awareness. The third and final phase of this project, conflict resolution, was implemented in part through the activity, "Carwash", lesson #3 (Appendix E). The

goal of this activity was for students to express positive feeling towards their classmates. Teacher facilitation through modeling was necessary to ensure all students received positive comments from all students. This activity left most students feeling good about themselves.

The review of discipline referrals during the intervention period of this project reflected minimal referrals overall. Two of the three schools reported zero discipline referrals during this period and the third school reported a total of three referrals within the given time period. Low discipline referrals during the targeted intervention period reflect positively on the project.

Student and teacher surveys also met with success. Researchers must note that the sample group in one classroom increased by two students early in the study. Results of student surveys, both pre and post, were as follows. Question number one, "I feel safe in the classroom" solicits personal feelings toward classroom safety. After comparing both sets of results 38% of the students previously surveyed strongly agreed they were safe in the classroom, 51% agreed, .01% disagreed and 0% strongly disagreed. In comparison, the post survey revealed that 49% strongly agreed they were safe in the classroom, 54% agreed, and 0% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The post survey the percentages increased across the board, (with the exception of the "strongly disagree" where there were no responses initially or post survey), with positive results.

Question number two, "Students in this classroom make fun of other students." This question demonstrates a negative increase in how children felt from .08% strongly agreeing initially, to 21% strongly agreeing in the post survey. Those students who agreed, disagreed or strongly disagreed remained relatively the same taking into

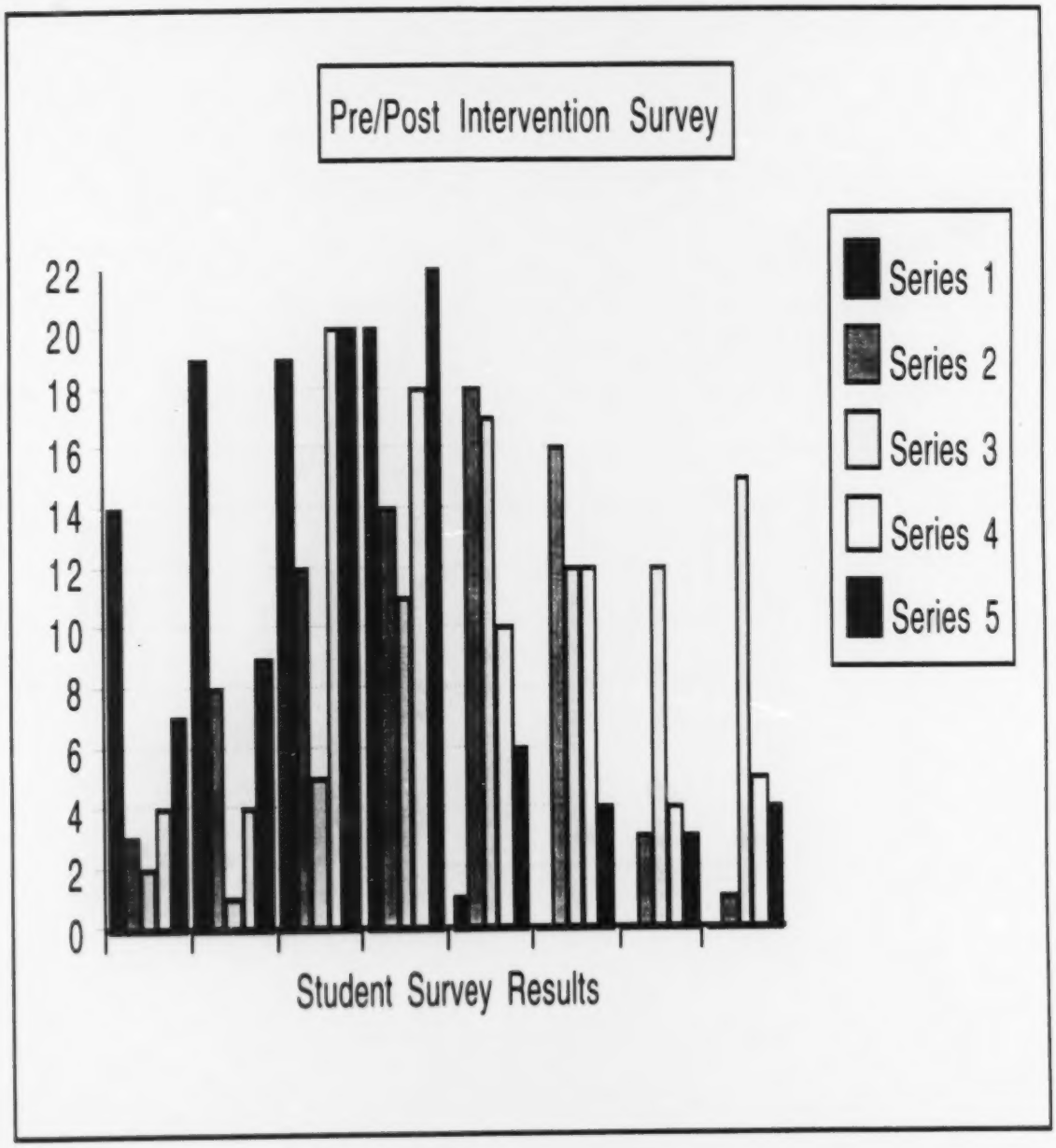
account the early increase of two students. According to this survey, it appears that students make fun of others.

The third question, "Students in this classroom hit or yell to settle their differences", showed interesting results. There were low numbers for strongly agreeing and strongly disagreeing, however, the statistics show a negative increase in both agreeing, 14%, pre-intervention to 28% post, and disagreeing, 46% initially to 31% post. It seems that students see yelling and hitting as a part of settling differences.

The fourth question of the survey, "I behave in the same way at school as I do at home", revealed a slight decrease in students believing that their behavior at home was much like that at school. Those strongly agreeing remained relatively the same, where those agreeing decreased from 54% to 46% in the post survey. Among those respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing, the statistics increased slightly. Researchers note that this may have a direct correlation with the activities in which students participated. The activities all utilize a self reflection processing component and therefore, this may indicate the initial stages of self reflection among these students.

Student survey question five, "I like coming to school", showed an overall positive increase. Those strongly agreeing increased from 19% pre to 23% post, those agreeing increased from 54% pre to 56% post and those disagreeing decreased from 16% pre to 10% post. Students strongly disagreeing remained relatively the same.

STUDENT SURVEY - (Respondents: 37 pre-intervention - 39 post intervention)



Teacher surveys reflect the following results: question number one: "What percentage of your students do not have respect for , or a favorable impression of themselves?" Under the less than 25% category, the pre survey reflected 42% of the classes had less than 25% of students displaying poor self esteem, and in the post survey this decreased to .07%. Those in the 25-50% range went from 33% in the pre survey to 20% in the post survey. The 50-75% category was 17% pre and 10% post. In the 75-100% range, the percentage decreased from .08% pre to 0% in the post.

Question two on the teacher survey, "What percentage of students have difficulty working in groups?", shows a decrease from 69% pre to 73% post, in the amount of students who had difficulty working in groups at less than 25% of the entire class. In the 25-50% range the percentages were 19% pre and 10% post. The 75-100% category remained the same.

The third question, "What percentage of your students are verbally abusive to others?", reflected the following results. Among those responding in the less than 25% range, 64% of the class were in this category in the pre survey, which increased to 73% in the post survey. The 25-50% range remained somewhat the same as did the 50-75% range; however, the 50-100% range decreased from .08% in the pre to 0% in the post. Teacher opinion reflect a favorable decrease in this area.

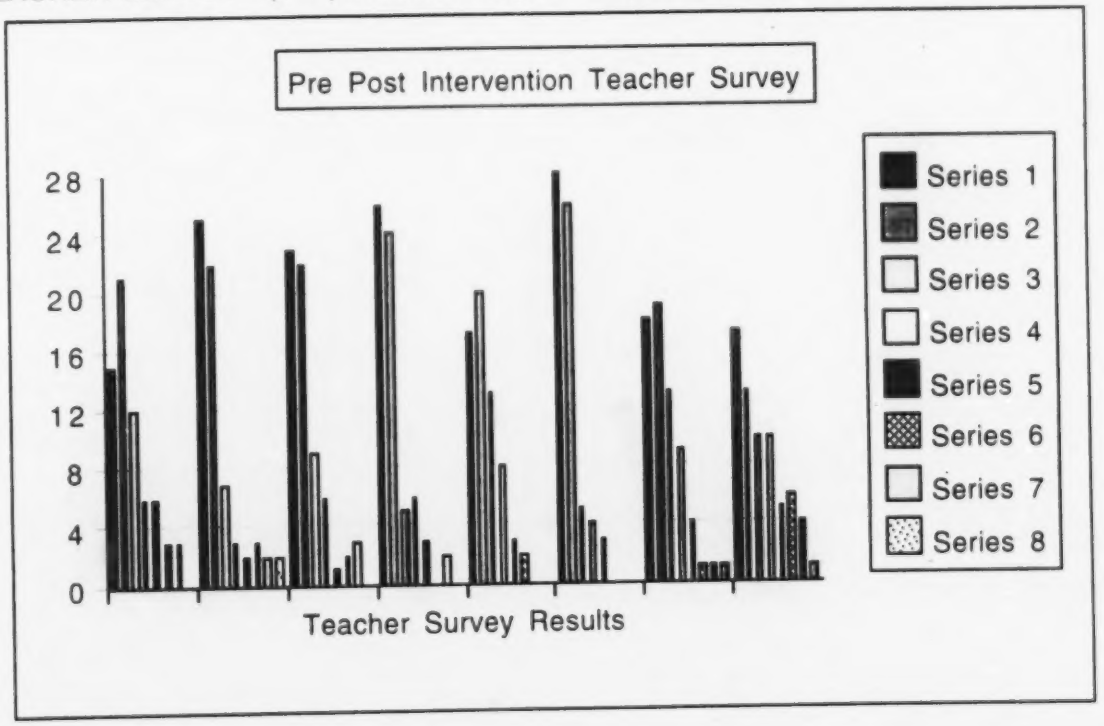
Question number four, "What percentage of your students are physically aggressive towards others?", actually reflects positively based on the amount of respondents for pre and post surveys. In the 50-75% range, the percentage went from .08% pre survey to 0% post survey, and the 75-100% range also reflected a decline from .06% to 0%. The less than 25% to 25-50% remained somewhat unchanged.

In the question five series, "What percentage of your students show little or no

respect for: others, adults, property of others?", positive results are also reflected. In the "others" category, less than 25% increased from 47% pre survey to 67% post survey and showed positive decreases in all other range areas. In the adult section, less than 25% again significant increases in positive perceptions appear with a 78% pre survey to a 87% post survey. Again, positive decreases in undesirable behaviors are reflected across this category. Under "property of others", increases in the perception of positive behaviors are reflected throughout all ranges.

The final teacher survey question number six, "What percentage of your students do not think before they act?", reflects an overall decrease in students not thinking before they act. In the pre survey less than 25% range, the percentage went from 47% of the class in this area, where the post survey shows a decrease to 43%. Similar decreases are reflected throughout the remaining ranges also.

TEACHER SURVEY - (Respondents: 36 pre-intervention, 30 post intervention)



Conclusions and Recommendations

The student surveys provided the researchers with some valuable insight into the affective domain that the advisory/advisee program addresses. While it appears that some of the statistics reflect negatively, it must also be noted that for many of these students, the fifth and sixth grades are the starting point for such education based social training. Given a more adequate time frame to both present students with social activities and collect additional behavioral and affective data, the results would be more conclusive as to the overall effectiveness of this project.

Overall, the teacher surveys favor an increase in the teachers' perception of self esteem within their students, and in general, teacher perceptions during the time of this project reflect positively.

As a result of the data collected it appears students had some degree of difficulty in internalizing the concept of conflict resolution, because they did not have an adequate maturity level to understand its true meaning. In order to fully understand conflict resolution students need to be able to communicate and have positive self esteem. Although this project did meet with some degree of success, it was felt that the time allowed was not sufficient to accomplish the goals to the degree intended. The project recognizes and recommends the need to track the same group of students for a minimum of two years in order to establish a solid baseline and allow further documentation of behavior. It should also be noted that developmental issues need to be considered. It is necessary to understand how this can influence the way children think about conflict resolution, self esteem, and communication.

Just as children need many opportunities to develop reading, writing and

mathematics skills, they also need many varied situations to develop positive self esteem, conflict resolution skills and good communication skills. Teachers need to be more involved and play an even greater role in helping students develop each of these skills.

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Appendix A

September, 1996

Dear Colleagues:

As part of my graduate work at Saint Xavier University, I am implementing a project to improve student's behavior in the classroom. As part of my work I will be asking you to fill out the attached survey.

Your responses will be held in confidence and your participation on the survey is voluntary.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or suggestions you might have.

Sincerely,

Classroom Teacher

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Appendix B

Teacher Survey

Please rate the following questions based on your students.

1	2	3	4
less than 25%	25%-50%	51%-75%	76%-100%

1. What percentage of your students do not have respect for, or a favorable impression of themselves?

1 2 3 4

2. What percentage of students have difficulty working in groups?

1 2 3 4

3. What percentage of your students are verbally abusive to others?

1 2 3 4

4. What percentage of your students are physically aggressive toward others?

1 2 3 4

5. What percentage of your students show little or no respect for:

other children	1	2	3	4
adults	1	2	3	4
property of others	1	2	3	4

6. What percentage of your students do not think before they act?

1 2 3 4

Student Survey

Directions: Circle the answer which states how you honestly feel.

1. I feel safe in the classroom.	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
2. Students in this classroom make fun of other students.	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
3. Students in the classroom hit or yell to settle their differences.	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
4. I behave in the same way at school as I do at home.	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
5. I like coming to school.	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE

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Appendix D

BEHAVIOR CHECKLIST

NAME	VERBAL AGGRESSION	PHYSICAL AGGRESSION	NON-COOPERATION

Appendix: E
Lesson #1

"DOUBLE CIRCLES"

(20 minutes)

OBJECTIVES: a continual information gathering activity
learning to respond to questions
learning one thing new about a new person

PROCEDURE: Divide class into two equal groups.
One group forms an inner circle facing other group forming the outer circle. Each pair facing each other introduces themselves before each question. Partners share their answers to questions posed by the facilitator. Questions should be safe and not personal. After each question has been answered the outer circle moves one person to the right.

FOLLOW-UP: Return to one large circle and tell one thing you learned about someone.

Sample Questions

* Where is your favorite place to go for dinner?
* What was the best thing that happened this summer?
* What is your favorite month?
* Where do you go when you want to be alone?
* What is your favorite musical group?
* What's your favorite hobby?
* If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go?
* What do you like to do in your spare time?
* What is your favorite class?
* Who is your favorite relative?
* What do you want to be when you are an adult?
* What is your favorite movie, book, or song?

Appendix: E
Lesson #2

"ME COLLAGE"

OBJECTIVE: To help students develop greater self-awareness

TIME: Two or more sessions

MATERIALS: Magazines, scissors, glue, construction paper

PROCEDURES:

1. Students should cut out pictures, words and symbols that they feel are representative of themselves; things they like to do, things they own, things they would like to own, places they've been, people they admire, etc. Magazines should be collected well in advance. Parents can help as well by contributing magazines.

2. Then they are to paste these pictures, words and symbols onto a paper to make a collage. The shape of their collages is completely up to the individual.

3. After the collages are finished, display them in the room.

4. Have each student explain to the class some of the items in their collage.

5. You might have them work their own name into the arrangement of the collage.

Appendix: E
Lesson #3

"The Car Wash"

Purpose:
To express positive feelings for others.

Materials:
Activity Sheet: The Car Wash

At a Glance
Students praise and compliment their classmatesin a whole-class activity.
One class period

Motivation

Discuss the need to take time to tell others their strengths and good points. Talk about how almost everyone needs positive feedback; but, all too often, people make fun of others or are insulting--even to their friends. Tell students that in this activity they'll be asked to praise and compliment their classmates.

Activity:

1. Form two lines of students, placing them parallel to each other. Then send one student at a time through "The Car Wash." As each student walks between the lines, everyone else should say words of praise, affection, and encouragement to him or her or "wash" that student with good feelings.
2. Distribute the activity sheet: *The Car Wash* and have students complete it individualilly by writing in their reactions to being "washed."

Follow-up:

Discuss how praise and encouragement can produce a sparkling, happy, shiny new "car" at the end of the wash. Have students share their reactions to this experience with classmates. You might divide them into small groups had have them discuss how they felt. You can also try sending two or three students through "The Car Wash" at the beginning of each advisory class--for a regular wash of praise.